

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1, 2, 6-8, 12, 14-17 and 19 will be pending, wherein it is proposed to amend claims 1, 2 and 8, and cancel claims 10 and 18. Entry of these amendments in the period after a final rejection are appropriate because these amendments place the application in immediate condition for allowance.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication on page 8 of the Office Action that claims 14-17 are allowed.

Applicant also notes with appreciation the indication on page 9 of the Office Action that claims 8 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form, and claim 18, from which claim 8 previously depended, has been canceled.

Applicant notes that dependent claims 20 and 21 have not been rejected in the final Office Action, and each recite similar elements to those previously recited in claim 8, before being rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, the elements of dependent claims 20 and 21 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 2, respectively. Because dependent claims 20 and 21 were not rejected in

the final Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that the incorporation of the elements of these claims into independent claims 1 and 2 place these claims in immediate condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,427,115 to Sekiyama and U.S. Patent No. 6,816,783 to Hashima et al. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

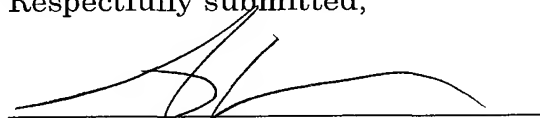
As discussed above, independent claims 1 and 2 have been amended to include elements of claims that are not rejected by prior art in the final Office Action, and independent claim 18 has been canceled. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, 6, 7 and 19 are now in immediate condition for allowance. Notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #029267.55527US).

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stephen W. Palan', written over a horizontal line.

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